

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, MILI

SUBJ: COMMUNIST INTENTIONS TOWARDS THAILAND

REF: (A) BANGKOK 33436, (B) RANGOON 2391

SUMMARY: GDR AMBASSADOR TO RANGOON/BANGKOK INSISTS THAT SRV IS INTENT ON BUILDING GOOD SOCIETY AT HOME AND THEREFORE DESIRES PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH THAILAND AND OTHER NEIGHBORS. HOWEVER, HE ADMITS VIETNAMESE ARE DEEPLY RESENTFUL OF THAI ROLE IN VIETNAM WAR, AND SUSPICIOUS THAT THE THAI ARE PLANNING TO REINSTALL AN AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. ACCORDING TO HIM, SRV IS DEFINITELY ORIENTED TOWARD SOVIET SYSTEM, AND GDR - SRV PARTY-TO-PARTY RELATIONS ARE CLOSE AND CORDIAL. HE IS VERY CLOSE TO SRV MISSION IN RANGOON. I BELIEVE KUEHNEL IS HONEST IN EXPRESSING HOPE AND (SLIGHTLY QUALIFIED) CONFIDENCE THAT SRV WILL PLAY A PEACEFUL ROLE IN SEA. PERHAPS GDR WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL FOR SENDING CALMING MESSAGES TO HANOI, IF SUCH IS NEEDED. END SUMMARY.

1. AS RECENTLY AS LAST TUESDAY, WHEN I ARRANGED FOR HIM TO BE BRIEFED ON THE NEW THAI SITUATION BY A COUPLE OF VISITING AMERICAN POLITICAL OFFICERS FROM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK, GDR AMBASSADOR SIEGFRIED KUEHNEL WAS INSISTING THAT THE SRV IS INTENT ON BUILDING PROSPERITY AT HOME AND THEREFORE DESIRES PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, SPECIFICALLY THAILAND. HE DID, HOWEVER, SAY THAT THE VIETNAMESE WERE DEEPLY RESENTFUL OF THE THAI ROLE IN

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THE VIETNAM WAR AND SUSPICIOUS OF THAI INTENTIONS REGARDING A

REINTRODUCTION OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. (WE ASSURED KUEHNEL THIS WAS NOT IN THE CARDS). KUEHNEL WAS SO INSISTENT ON SRV PEACEABLE INTENTIONS THAT HE SEEMED GENUINELY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THE SRV IS STILL PROVIDING AT LEAST LIMITED ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNIST TERRORISTS IN THAILAND. HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SRV MIGHT BE SEEKING TO PRESERVE THE CT CONNECTION FOR POSSIBLE LEVERAGE AGAINST THE THAI.

2. KUEHNEL, THOUGH AN INTELLIGENT MAN, IS A LOYAL COMMUNIST, AND COULD BE TRYING TO DECEIVE US. OR HE HIMSELF MIGHT HAVE BEEN DECEIVED ABOUT SRV INTENTIONS. BUT IT HAS SEEMED TO ME IN CONVERSATIONS ON THIS GENERAL SUBJECT SPREAD OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS (SEE REF B), THAT KUEHNEL IS STATING HIS HONEST VIEWS ABOUT SRV INTENTIONS, BASED ON HIS CLOSE CONTACTS IN THE SRV MISSION HERE, MEETINGS WITH SRV OFFICIALS TRANSITING RANGOON ABOARD AEROFLOT, AND INFORMATION FROM HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. KUEHNEL ALSO SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT THE PARTY-TO-PARTY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GDR AND SRV GIVES HIM ACCESS TO MORE ACCURATE INFORMATION ON SRV INTENTIONS THAN IS GENERALLY AVAILABLE.

3. THE GDR RULING PARTY HAS BEEN HELPING THE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAMME PARTY STRENGTHEN ITS ORGANIZATION, AS WELL AS ADVISING IT ON SUCH ECONOMIC POLICY MATTERS AS THE REVIVAL OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR; PERHAPS THE GDR HAS BEEN DOING SOMETHING OF THE SAME FOR THE SRV. IF SO, THE GDR MIGHT BE AN EFFECTIVE AUXILIARY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH HANOI, IF THE NEED ARISES. IF THE SRV AND THE THAI ARE BOTH OVERREACTING TO EXAGGERATED SUSPICIONS OF EACH OTHER, IT COULD BE DESIRABLE TO SEEK TO ALLY THE SUSPICIONS BY A VARIETY OF MEANS.
OSBORN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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